

MINUTES OF MARION CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
COUNCIL CHAMBERS AT CITY HALL
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2021
6:30 P.M.

A regular meeting was held by Marion City Council on Tuesday, December 14, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. Mayor Ashley Brady presided. Council members Ralph Atkinson, Ronald Atkinson, Michael Baker, Joseph Frazier, and Tassie Lewis were present. Mayor Pro-tem Emerson Hunt was absent. Staff present were City Administrator Alan Ammons, City Treasurer Patricia Brown, City Clerk Lakesha Shannon, City Attorney James Brogdon III, Recreation Director Cliff Wilbanks, and Police Chief Bobby Crawford.

Mayor Brady called the meeting to order and requested to amend the agenda. He noted that there was a typo on Item #16 on the agenda in which the proposed Executive Session was listed as Administrator's Report in error. Councilman Michael Baker made a motion to amend the agenda to correct Item #16 to add the executive session. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Tassie Lewis, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Ashley Brady gave the opening prayer and led the Pledge of Allegiance. He then welcomed citizens and guests to the meeting.

Councilman Joseph Frazier made a motion to approve the minutes of the regular City Council Meeting held on November 9, 2021. The motion was seconded by Councilman Michael Baker; motion carried unanimously.

NOVEMBER EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH:

PFC Ryan Bulgier with the Marion Police Department was named the November Employee of the Month. Mayor Brady expressed his thanks to PFC Bulgier for the great job he does in the City.

2nd READING OF ORDINANCE 21-07 AN ORDINANCE TO ADOPT THE A REVISED

BUSINESS LICENSE ORDINANCE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE BUSINESS LICENSE

STANDARDIZATION ACT (2020 ACT NO. 176):

Councilwoman Tassie Lewis motioned to approve 2nd reading of Ordinance 21-07 **An Ordinance to Adopt a Revised Business License Ordinance in Accordance With The Business License Standardization Act (2020 Act No. 176)**. The motion was seconded by Councilman Ronald Atkinson; motion carried unanimously.

1st READING OF ORDINANCE 21-08 AN ORDINANCE UTILIZING AUTHORITY FOUND IN

§23-31-320 AND §23-31-520 OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS, AS AMENDED,

TO PROHIBIT OPEN CARRY OF FIREARMS AT ALL EVENTS PERMITTED BY THE CITY OF

MARION:

Councilman Michael Baker motioned to approved 1st Reading of Ordinance 21-08 **An Ordinance Utilizing Authority Found in §23-31-320 and §23-31-520 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, As Amended, to Prohibit Open Carry of Firearms at All Events Permitted by the City of Marion.** The motion was seconded by Councilman Ronald Atkinson. Mayor Brady noted the approved concealed weapons sign that will be displayed at

all city facilities along with stickers. Hearing no further discussion, the motion carried unanimously.

1st READING OF ORDINANCE 21-09 AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE SALARIES OF THE CITY OF MARION ELECTED OFFICIALS:

Councilman Ralph Atkinson motioned to approve 1st reading of Ordinance 21-09 **An Ordinance Amending the Salaries of the City of Marion Elected Officials**. The motion was seconded by Councilman Michael Baker. Mayor Ashley Brady voted no. The motion carried.

PUMP STATION 574 EASEMENT:

City Administrator Alan Ammons stated that this is another phase of the upgrades to prevent overflow and flooding in the areas of Jones Avenue, and Walnut and Hampton Streets. Councilman Ralph Atkinson asked if this upgrade would help with the Northside Avenue area as well. Mr. Ammons confirmed that it would address that area. Councilwoman Tassie Lewis motioned to approve the Pump Station 574 Easement. The motion was seconded by Councilman Joseph Frazier; motion carried unanimously.

2021 HOLIDAY SCHEDULE:

Mayor Brady noted that the proposed 2021 holiday closing schedule for the City includes December 24, December 27, and December 28, 2021 to observe the Christmas holiday. New Year's will be observed on January 3, 2022. Councilman Michael Baker motioned to approve the 2021 Holiday Schedule. The motion was seconded by Councilman Joseph Frazier; motion carried unanimously.

2022 CITY COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE:

Councilwoman Tassie Lewis motioned to approve the 2022 City Council Meeting Schedule as presented. The meetings will be held the second Tuesday of each month. The motion was seconded by Councilman Ronald Atkinson; motion carried unanimously.

APPOINT JAKE KENNEDY TO REPLACE J.P. WILLIAMS ON THE HISTORIC DISTRICT

COMMISSION:

Mayor Brady noted that Mr. J.P. Williams has served on the Historic District Commission for a number of years and has requested to retire. Councilman Ronald Atkinson made a motion to appoint Jake Kennedy to replace J.P. Williams on the Historic District Commission. The motion was seconded by Councilman Michael Baker; motion carried unanimously.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

City Administrator Alan Ammons provided an update on Covid operations. He stated that the City continues to track the cases of the new Covid variant, and Marion County has been doing well. There were several days recently that zero cases were reported. He stated that the City will address any issues accordingly should cases start to rise.

Mr. Ammons stated that Council previously discussed the 1% Fund for volunteer fire fighters for the death benefit of \$2,500 starting January 1, 2022. He stated that the City will not be able to get back into the Firefighters Association until July 1, 2022. Mr. Ammons stated that he obtained an insurance policy estimate as instructed by Council. The estimate is for a 1-year \$5,000 coverage policy that will cover approximately 30 firefighters. The total policy cost is \$2,500. In July 2022, the previous policy will be effective again, and it will be funded by the

1% Fund. Councilman Ralph Atkinson made a motion to allow City Treasurer Patricia Brown to move funding to accommodate the fee of \$2,500 to provide insurance for approximately 30 firefighters with coverage of \$5,000 for a 1-year period. The motion was seconded by Councilman Michael Baker; motion carried unanimously.

CITY ATTORNEY'S LEGAL UPDATE

There was no legal update.

DISTRICTS AND CITY UPDATE FOR COUNCIL AND MAYOR

Mayor Ashley Brady announced that the City of Marion Recreation's 8U and 10U soccer teams are state champions. He commented that the kids played hard, won the trophies, and were celebrated in Marion Christmas Parade. The teams will be formally recognized and presented with awards during the January 2022 city council meeting. Mayor Brady thanked Recreation Director Cliff Wilbanks, the coaching staff, parents, and volunteers for all they do for the kids.

Mayor Brady reported that the City received a \$500,000 CDBG grant to purchase a new fire truck. He stated that it would take about 8-9 months before the fire truck is delivered. Mayor Brady further commented that additional funding will have to be provided to cover the total cost of the truck.

Mayor Brady highlighted that the City had a tremendous Christmas parade and tree lighting ceremony with a huge turnout of about 3,000 attendees. He noted that this is possibly the largest turnout ever. The event was followed by a fantastic firework show. He stated that the weather was perfect, and the event was a good thing for the City. Mayor Brady

commented that the City looks forward to this event every year, and seeks ways to help improve it. He further stated that the event may be live streamed next year on Facebook.

Mayor Brady noted that the Annual Employee Holiday Luncheon will take place on December 17 at the Shannon Wilkerson Gym at 1:00 pm. The annual Christmas Food Box Drive will take place on December 20 at which time 100 food boxes will be distributed. He thanked Food Lion for preparing the food boxes for distribution. The food boxes will be delivered to the individuals by fire and police department staff.

Mayor Brady stated that extra trash containers will be placed out to handle the excess trash during the Christmas holidays. There will be two 30-yard containers located at CD Joyner Auditorium, two 30-yard containers located at Grice's Recreation Center, and one 30-yard container located at the old recycle center.

Mayor Brady reported that the patching will begin on December 15 for the paving project on Henry McGill Street.

Councilman Michael Baker stated that Mr. Ammons recently had a conference to address some of the complaints regarding the Christmas parade. He stated that many residents in the City of Marion do not know who to contact with their complaints, or issues that need to be addressed. He asked that starting 2022, we develop a way to inform the public of the issues that the City does not handle. For example, school board and county issues. He stated that the citizens need to know where to go for their various concerns.

Councilman Joseph Frazier had no comments.

Councilman Ronald Atkinson had no comments.

Councilman Ralph Atkinson asked that information be communicated to the public regarding fireworks and the times that they are allowed. Mayor Brady stated that the City's fireworks ordinance will be posted on social media, and on the digital billboards. Mayor Brady stated that he spoke with a group this past summer who requested to make some changes to the current fireworks ordinance. He stated that this is something that needs to be addressed. Council Baker requested that information also be provided to the police department since they are bombarded by calls regarding the fireworks. Mayor Brady stated that the fireworks ordinance was discussed with the police chief earlier today during a meeting.

Councilman Ralph Atkinson announced that he will be retiring the end of the year and moving away. He stated that this will be his last city council meeting, as he will also be retiring from city council after 32 plus years. Councilman Atkinson thanked everyone for their support during the years. He also thanked the citizens of Marion for allowing him to serve. He further expressed his appreciation for the friendships and the trust that the citizens have bestowed upon him to serve. Mayor Brady thanked Councilman Atkinson for all that he has done for the City of Marion for the past 32 years, and wished him the best on his retirement. Mayor Brady further added that his wisdom and input in the meetings will be missed.

Councilwoman Tassie Lewis commented that she will miss Councilman Ralph Atkinson, as she has learned a lot from him. Councilwoman Lewis wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year. She also thanked everyone for their support with the 5th Annual Rise Above It All Coat Drive. She stated that the event has been even more successful this year than in past years, even with the Covid modifications. She stated that they

provided coats to daycares first which included Happy Hearts Daycare and Pleasant Grove Academy. She thanked Police Chief Bobby Crawford for all his help in distributing the coats at the daycares. She stated that participants from the Marion County Adult Daycare were given hoodies and a light lunch at Grice's Recreation Center as part of the event, and she thanked Mayor Brady for being there. Following the luncheon, the event was opened up to the public for coat distribution. She noted that the most rewarding part was receiving personally made thank you cards from the children who received coats. She also thanked Sheriff Brian Wallace, City Administrator Alan Ammons and his church family for their support every year, Director Cliff Wilbanks, and everyone who was instrumental in making the event a success. Mayor Brady noted that many children walking by after school that day did not have a jacket, and were able to stop by and get one.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Councilman Ralph Atkinson made a motion to go into executive session to discuss the Public Works Department. The motion was seconded by Councilman Ronald Atkinson, and carried unanimously.

Returning from executive session, Councilman Ralph Atkinson made a motion to go back into regular session. The motion was seconded by Councilman Joseph Frazier, and carried unanimously.

Mayor Brady stated that there was no action taken in executive session.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no further business, a motion was made to adjourn by Councilman Ralph Atkinson and seconded by Councilman Ronald Atkinson; motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Ashley Brady

City Clerk Lakesha Y. Shannon